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NSC BRIEFING

20 May 1954

INDOCHINA

I. Danger to Laos and Cambodia

A. Nervous atmosphere both

Cambodia and Laos, awaiting
Viet Minh next move.

1. Laos government plans
UN appeal if new
invasion in force.

2. Laos regulars total only 20,000. Incapable repulsing heavy invasion, would need substantial additional French reinforcement -- to about 10,000 French Union regulars already there.

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C. However, if French command in
Tonkin delta can develop any
spirit and capability, Viet
Minh military threat to Laos,
Cambodia can be checked by
attack supply lines. Thus
delta still #1 target.

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D. In delta this week, most significant Viet Minh action was regiment-strength attack near Phu Ly (60 miles south Hanoi).

1. French counterattack successful.
2. Losses both sides "heavy."

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